

# Writers in Residence



Spring 2022

Hiram College Cohort

For the 49,000 youth confined in a juvenile facility in the US.

For the 2,200 youth confined in a juvenile facility in Ohio.

These youth have been separated from family and friends. Many of them don't feel seen, heard, or understood.

Their creative writing in this text rewrites the stereotypes and biases of a juvenile in detention.

This is for them.



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BSG 20

*Property of Writers in Residence Library*

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# Mission

## TEACH.

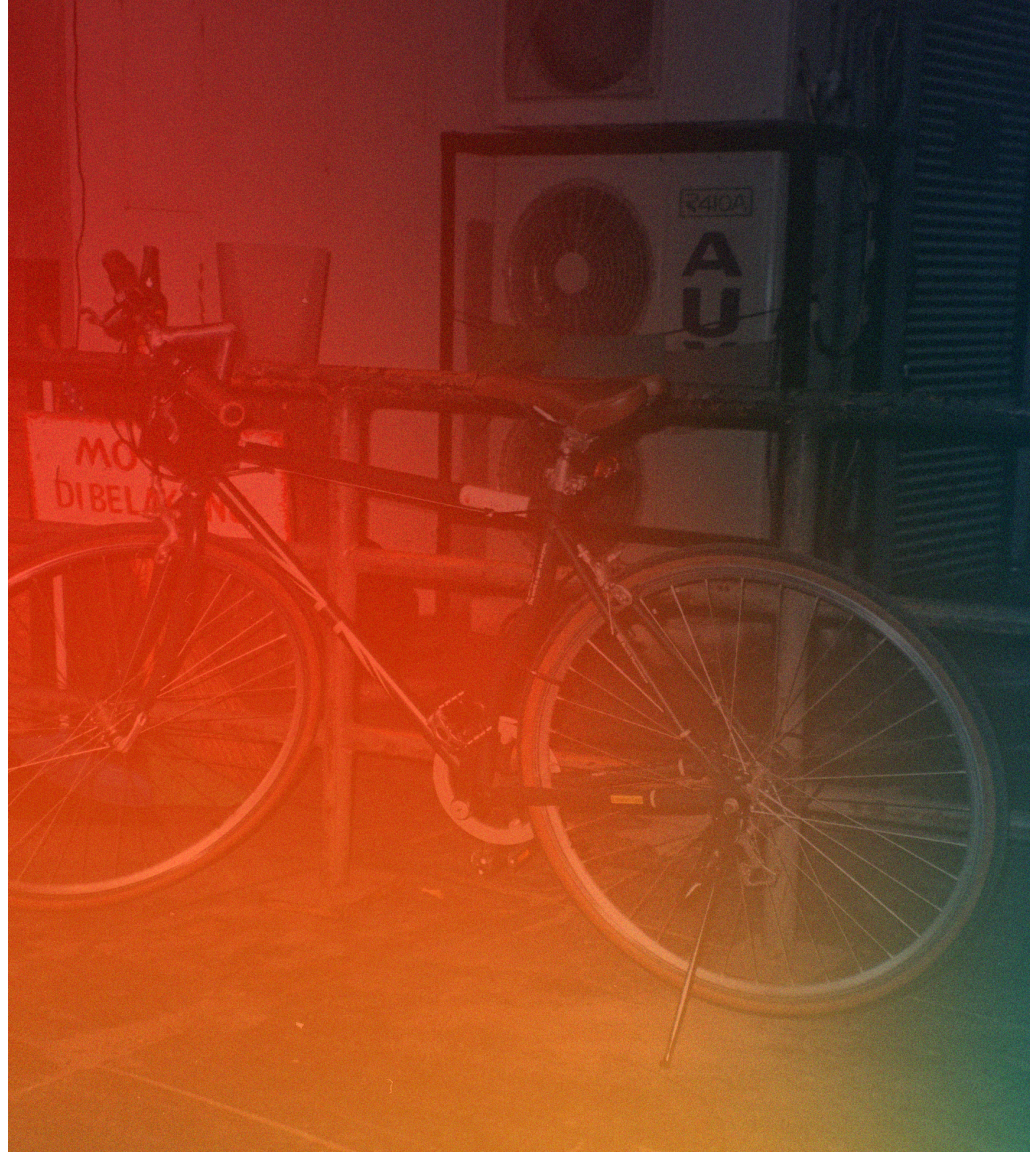
We teach creative writing  
to youth who  
are incarcerated.

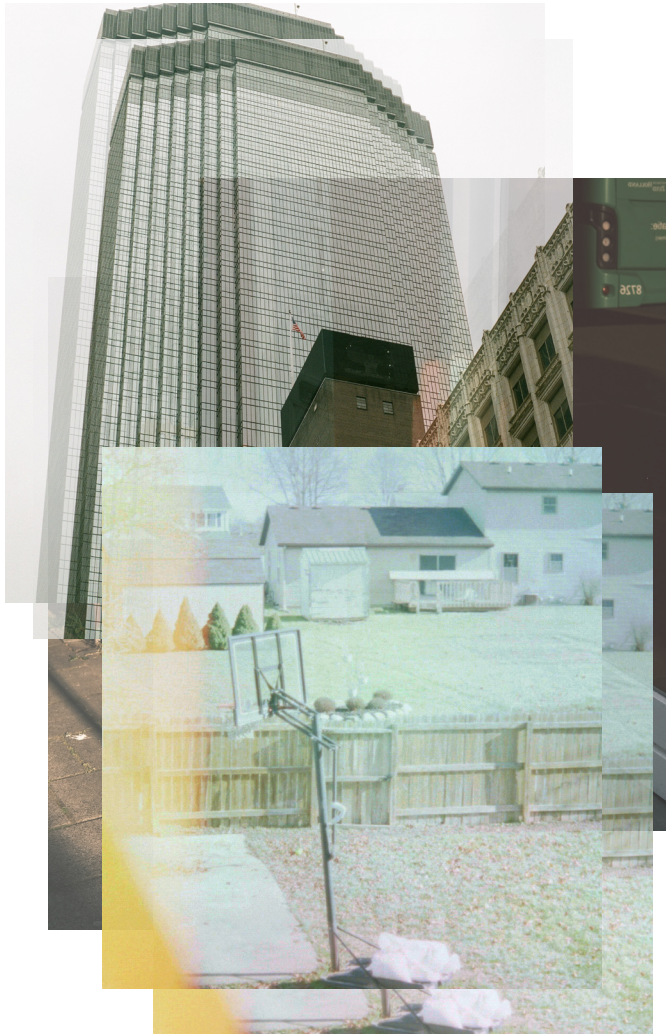
## EMPOWER.

We empower our  
residents' voices.

## ASSIST.

We assist in their  
re-entry.





# Values

**JUSTICE.** We believe in creating an environment where justice becomes visible, where restoration from wrong is possible, where people are seen as more than their worst moments, where people can create a future not doomed to repeat the past.

**EMPOWERMENT.** We believe that our residents can build their self-esteem, resilience, and power through working on their writing, their reflection, their communication, through the creative writing workshop experience.

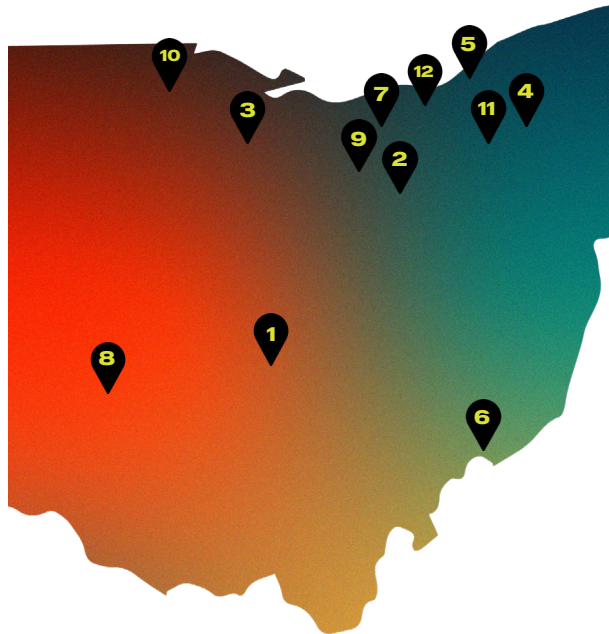
**DIGNITY.** We believe that our residents deserve to discover and recognize their own dignity and self-worth through our creative writing workshops. We also believe that if we respect ourselves, our residents, and our student volunteers then we successfully lead by example.

**COMMUNITY.** We believe in the power of community. This means that we continually welcome and accept our residents into our communities because they belong to an environment that promotes individuality and empowerment, especially upon re-entry. We also believe in the creation of a collaborative atmosphere that amplifies all voices together in a spirit of mutuality and kindness.

**RELATIONSHIPS.** We believe in fostering genuine, strong, and long-lasting relationships as well as walking with our residents as they navigate the path to re-entry.



# SCHOOLS



- |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Capital University      | 7. Oberlin College             |
| 2. College of Wooster      | 8. University of Dayton        |
| 3. Heidelberg University   | 9. Baldwin Wallace University  |
| 4. Hiram College           | 10. Bowling Green State Univ.  |
| 5. John Carroll University | 11. Case Western Reserve Univ. |
| 6. Marietta College        | 12. Cleveland State University |

Circleville JCF  
 Montgomery County CAS  
 Seneca County YC  
 Portage Geauga County JDC  
 Cuyahoga Hills JCF  
 Cuyahoga County JDC  
 Washington County JC  
 Medina County JDC  
 Cuyahoga County JDC  
 Lorain County JDH  
 Indian River JCF  
 Wood County JDC  
 Franklin County JDC

# JUVENILE FACILITIES

# Impact

To understand our impact on our residents, we survey them at every creative writing workshop.

These surveys give us quantitative and qualitative data so we can provide our residents with a high-quality program experience.

Our Creative Writing Workshop occurs in spring and fall seasons for 12-16 weeks. Each session runs for 60-90 minutes either in-person or remotely via Zoom or Teams and consists of 10-15 residents, 5-7 student volunteers, and 1 teaching artist. Then, we publish, showcase, and distribute chapbooks filled with our residents' creative writing inside juvenile facilities, on campuses, and throughout the local communities to raise awareness about the juvenile justice system.

Visit [writersnresidence.org](https://writersnresidence.org) to learn more!

## FY 2022

### Average

78 residents  
5 student volunteers  
56 hours  
\$1,680 valuation

### Total

621 residents  
36 student volunteers  
449 hours  
\$2,242 valuation  
8 cohorts

## Year to Date

### Average

34 residents  
7 student volunteers  
82 hours  
\$2,148 valuation  
5 cohorts

### Total

1,403 residents  
195 student volunteers  
2,356 hours  
\$63,776 valuation  
12 cohorts



# Me and Bob Ross Painting Scenic Valleys on the International Space Station

Hiram College Cohort

Dear reader,

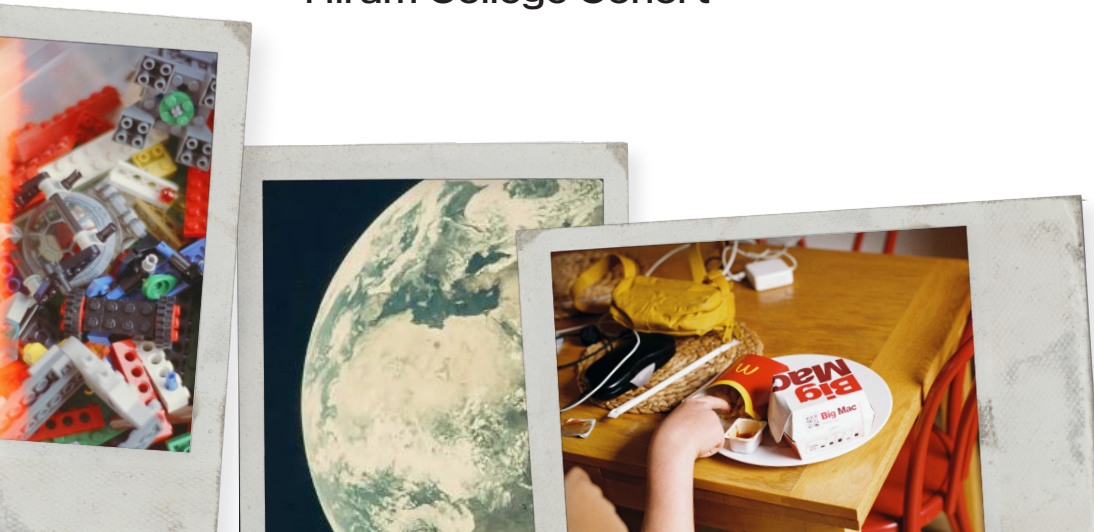
This is our third year and sixth semester working with residents at Portage-Geauga Juvenile Detention Center, and we were glad to remain back together in person with both familiar and new faces. We've gotten to know our residents well, and we are proud of the growth they have shown both as writers and individuals.

We chose this title from one of our resident's poems from our workshop based on Kevin Latimer's "Joy," which is about space and power. The PGJDC is located in a scenic part of rural Portage County, but our residents are unable to see it. They are isolated,

floating around the juvenile justice system. Through their writing, residents described how they caught glimpses of stars through narrow escape-proof windows. The residents share cramped quarters, like astronauts aboard the ISS, and are kind enough to show us around their world. Their perspective is continually enlightening. Their experiences have been vast and created wonderful conversations about family, language, identity, and cheeseburgers. This semester our writers showed much engagement in not only the weekly workshop, but the process of our organization, and we've enjoyed mentoring them as they created the works that appear in this chapbook. We appreciate their receptiveness to both the new and familiar. They were always willing to work with us, despite the occasions when we would forget to bring snacks or sometimes even pens. They are out of this world—if you'll forgive us for the pun.

Covid remains an ongoing concern, and we'd like to thank the staff for working with us through every new curve and roadblock. And, of course, thank you to our residents for showing up and writing.

Hiram College Cohort



## Untitled

JJ

Abortion. Tough. Push to the end.  
Play games, eat, work, sleep, repeat.  
There's one race: the human race.  
My heart's crushed, not my future.  
Work and school: just the start.  
Great effort equals: blood, sweat, tears.  
Wife and kids: tough, but great.  
Writing music: that's just the beginning.  
I can do it: watch me!

## Untitled

NP

I have to fail to win  
Movies are better than most shows

## Untitled

JH

Brandon sucks at basketball, I'm better.  
Isaac and Isaiah are fraternal twins.

## Untitled

AC

I am damaged, not broken yet.  
I was loved, now I'm lost.  
Look at now, not at then.  
I gave myself; they gave pain.  
The trail has lost its need.

## Untitled

KM

I will be hungry all the time.  
I am level four because I listen.  
I will watch a lot of anime.  
I like watching sports and playing.  
I am a small little kid.  
I'd like to play the guitar. I'll be singing my favorite songs.  
I'll be deadlifting in my element.  
I'll be cooking for the homies.  
I like getting into good anime.



## Six-Word Memoir

CH

I'm blue, but I am sad.

I am cold, but I am hot. Bored, sad, home, happy brothers forever.

Brothers day ones, sisters protect forever.

Slide down the block, get them whacked.

## Untitled

DC

I always like summer the best because being in the hot weather means being able to walk to the corner store behind my house in slides, shorts, and a tank top.

Also everybody outside listening to music playing cards, football, and basketball.

## The Reason I Like Winter

IM

I always like winter best because Christmas time always brings a kind of nostalgic feeling that I never get.

## Untitled

AW

I always liked winter best. You can drink hot chocolate from the downtown Canton Christmas Festival.

And candy cones

And eggnog

And lots of

cookies and milk

and Christmas dinner by yourself watching Krampus. Listen to Christmas carols and go see the light show with your dog. And sleep warm all the time.

## Ravenna, OH

BW

I always liked summer best. Hanging out at city park, getting lost in the trailer park.

The fresh cut grass, playing in the rain.

The long trips to Walmart. Octane night with all the cars. The crackheads dancing their tune.

Or dancing in the built-up water in the backyard.

Friends all walking at night and the fresh smell of tar.

The nights, so cloudy, you can't see the stars.

Or laying in your yard counting stars.

Summer in Ravenna.

## Why I Like Summer

KM

I always like summer best because I get to swim in my friends pool, and I get to play more sports and work out with the team.

I get to watch anime and peace because everyone is usually outside.

The bad thing though is my dog barking when we're inside because other people are out.

## Dear Dad

JS

I was in space and I just see my dad.

It's weird to see him because he died last year and I miss him and I just wish he was here.

But he was the best guy that I know is a joy to me.

## Better Summer

RF

I always like summer best because that's when school is out, I can get outside more and enjoy a nice bike ride.

## Love

DC

Feels like love is a game. Love is family, friends, block, hood.

Boxing is forever in my blood.

## Untitled

DB

I'm a reverse sour patch kid. Sweet on the outside, sour inside but overall I'm good.

## Untitled

CM

I'm a baddie

I think I'm the cutest

I'm smart

I'm conniving

Hot

I got time to graduate

My smile

I'm funny

My hair

My color



## Untitled

BS

Can an ant hill be a mountain?

Is freedom all right or privilege?

Does a judge choose law or opinion? Are self-memoirs fact or fabrications?

## Untitled

AW

I'm in space with my dog trying to catch the food that's floating around us. As my dog chases ham, I sit there wondering why Peter Griffin is staring at me while I eat a chicken nugget. Then we start laughing and float away feeling joy.

## Untitled

IM

Me and Bob Ross painting scenic valleys on the I.S.S while listening to Beethoven and drinking pina coladas.

## Untitled

CB

floating above the earth,

looking down from above,

I see Baker Mayfield,

floating on a giant football.

He throws me a pass, I catch it and smile.

## Untitled

JS

I'm cute

My hair curly

I'm smart

I'm loud

I'm short

I'm young

I do my nails

My name is Julie like Romeo and Juliet

## Freestlye

DC

They say I'm not talented  
but I can rap and sing  
and people steady tryna to run down  
but I got that choppa on me.

## Untitled

RF

My father called me a piece of s\*\*t but  
I'm a good athlete,  
I'm good with people  
And I know I'm a good person  
because my friends told me.

## Untitled

DW

An animal driving a Cadillac through space.

## Untitled

CM

I would betray you now as my father on her alarm betrays him. Good, I  
don't have a bad one. No cap could be used as a lie when somebody lies.  
On who!  
I don't have any emotional part of the poem. It's okay.

## Untitled

CM

Ain't gonna hold you = Not gonna lie = No lie = Not gonna snatch you up  
and hold you

I'm not gonna hold you, the weather is pretty outside. Because I don't want  
to be that close to you, I'm not gonna hold you.

## Untitled

DC

I'm not gon fake you coo  
I'm not gon fake, I'm not gon lie to you.

## Untitled

CH

The gang  
My mom  
I'm creative  
Smart  
My hair  
My skin color

## Untitled

IM

They said I wasn't smart  
that I wasn't strong  
But I'm both  
I get good grades  
A lot of good grades  
I'm strong, I have lots of muscle

## Untitled

DW

Did pizza bussin.  
We were at the party jiggin then they just started bussin.

## Slang Terms

CH

Hella - slang and definition - a lot

I got hella money  
There's hella work.

## Hamburgers

CH

Hearing the sizzling of the grease.  
Seeing the way it browns.  
Hearing the way the grease pops.  
Smelling that garlic powder onion that I could you with.  
The taste of the juicy meat and cheesy taste that you give off.

## Untitled

JB

This cheese pizza is klappin from Domino's.  
This was a good show and it made me klap.

## Untitled

RF

FR

For real

Actually

## Untitled

RF

Pizza, Velveeta, shells, cheese

Creamy cheese, noodles, amazing

I always have you to have cheese with my food because it makes the food more thick.

Yes, I do like to cook meat products

Italian dishes

## Collard Greens

IM

My mom sweet and spicy collard greens. She usually makes it for me on my birthday. And I always look forward to my mother making them. They start to smell good

## Scrumptuous Bacon Cheeseburger

KM

The cheesy, greasy juiciness of the burger is just so good.

Mix with the tangy homemade barbecue sauce my momma puts on top.

Looking at it stacked up on the plate I can just taste it before I even pick it up.

Then there's the almost crunch sound as I bite through the bacon and lettuce.

## 3 Seconds

CH

With three seconds left to go I'm taking the ball out past to the point guard

He dribbled up to the court

With a dime of a pass to the corner

With our team mouth open

All you hear is the swish of the net

And the buzzer goes off and the crowd goes off with the win of the game.



## Away

AM

On the bus praying for my grandma.  
Stepping foot on the field for the last time  
Putting up numbers for her  
Birds flying  
Don't know what to do  
Walking off  
Number three signing out  
Never gonna play again

## From start

RF

Watching my little brother's first wrestling match compared to his tournament match.  
Second or first place was nice to see because of the improvement he made on his skills on the mat.

## Championship

DW

CRACK!  
As he ran the ball past my teammates and almost crossed the goal line for the touchdown.  
I came in, helmet and shoulder down. He fumbles the ball!!  
As I'm looking for where the ball fell I middle linebacker dives in and recovers it.  
We are up, 21-17 with 30 seconds left on the clock.  
Coach calls from the sidelines as we're in the huddle, "KNEE IT! KNEE THE BALL!"  
And that's game!  
We knelt it and those chumps walked off the field head down as we cheer

## Morning Ritual

CH

In the morning I wake up and do my hobby, then I brush my teeth, then I get in the shower.  
I get dressed then go make breakfast, after that I do my hobby again.  
I then go somewhere for a day. I walk to the store, then I go to a friend's house.

## Granny

CK

My Gma and Aunt go to church  
25/8, everyday.  
They even stay the night there.

## Game

RF

Before a football game or a wrestling match, I listen to music that makes me angry, so I can use more strength.

## Gray Trucks

AM

Dear Mariyon,  
You're still learning, still becoming a man  
And I'm sorry your life was so tragic  
At a young age, but I promise it'll get  
Better.

I'm also sorry you have to experience jail to open up  
your eyes because if it wasn't for jail you'd probably be dead.  
I'm sorry, but don't you be because I already went through  
it for you.

# Acknowledgements

We want to acknowledge the following individuals for their time, energy, and resources devoted to Writers in Residence:

- Residents and Juvenile Facility Staff
- Student Volunteers and Cohort Advisors
- Staff, Teaching Artists, and Contractors
- Board of Directors, Community Partners, and Donors

It takes a team to achieve what Writers in Residence does, so thank you to everyone involved!

# When you donate to Writers in Residence

Your contribution sustains our Creative Writing Workshop with teaching artists, writing materials, snacks, and chapbooks.

Your support assists our residents who are reentering into their communities with limited access to social services including housing, employment, food, health care, and education.

Your generosity educates our local communities and government officials about the juvenile justice system's traumatic effect on our youth.

**Visit [writersnresidence.org](https://writersnresidence.org) to donate  
or scan the code below.**



Writers in Residence is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization incorporated in Ohio.